

# SARAH LAMSTEIN

children's book author

## CLASSROOM GUIDE:

### ***Annie's Shabbat***

By Sarah Marwil Lamstein; Illustrated by Cecily Lang

#### **About the Book:**

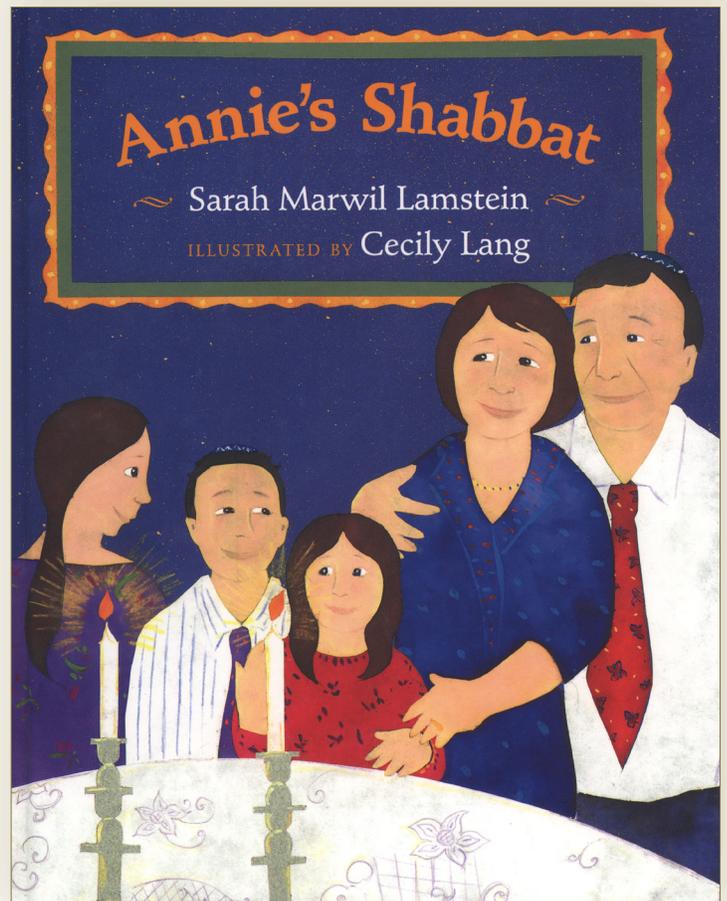
Annie loves the Jewish Sabbath, called Shabbat. It is the best part of the week with her family. She enjoys lighting the candles, eating a special meal, and going to worship. Over the course of the day, she listens to many stories both from the sacred book, the Torah, and from Jewish history.

#### **About the Guide:**

This guide includes discussion questions and projects appropriate for book clubs, literature circles, and classroom discussions. It is intended to provoke thought and insight into the subject and themes of this book, including Jewish life, family, traditions, and Biblical and historical events.

#### **About the Author:**

Sarah Lamstein received her B.A. and M.A. in English literature from the University of Michigan and her M.L.S. from Simmons College. She received an M.F.A. in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College. She was the school librarian at Milton Academy and the Roxbury Latin School, as well as library consultant at the Mather School in Boston. She lives with her husband in Newton, MA and is the mother of three grown children.



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### **Author Interview:**

1. What did you hope to show readers while writing "Annie's Shabbat?"

*Shabbat was a special time in our family, because it was a time when we were all together. I wanted to show readers the fun our family had each week as we celebrated Shabbat.*

2. What is your favorite thing to write?

*I like writing about what I love - the people I love, the wonders of the natural world, and acts of generosity and courage.*

3. Where do you get your ideas?

*I get my ideas from everywhere, whatever strikes my fancy. I must say that I get most of my ideas when I am walking outdoors, especially in conservation areas, looking at birds and other wildlife and noticing the plants and trees.*

4. What's your favorite part of Shabbat?

*My favorite part about Shabbat was sitting around the dining room table, all five of us kids and our mother and father, scrubbed and glowing, enjoying a perfectly delicious meal, chattering and laughing, laughing hardest when we kids weren't supposed to, during grace after meals.*

### **Pre-Reading:**

What is your favorite day of the week? Why? Do you know the word Sabbath? What does it mean? What types of things do people do and not do on the Sabbath? Why?

### **Comprehension Questions:**

1. When is the Jewish Sabbath?
2. How is it celebrated?
3. What is the name of the Jewish holy book?
4. What is manna?
5. Why does everyone try to touch the Torah?
6. What is havdalah?

## Discussion Guide:

1. How is everyone preparing themselves for Shabbat?
2. What are the special foods shared at the Shabbat meal? How does Annie help her mother?  
How do you help your mom prepare for important meals?
3. When does the Shabbat celebration begin? Why does Annie's mama light the candles?  
When is Shabbat over?
4. What story did Annie's dad share about Shabbat? What stories does your father tell?  
Are they important to you? Why?
5. What does Annie mean when she says that though they sit farther apart at the dining room table "it seems we're sitting closer on Shabbat." When do you feel like this in your family?
6. Why did the Jewish people leave Egypt and follow Moses? Why were they still unhappy?  
How did God solve their concerns? How are your problems solved?
7. Describe what happens in the synagogue.
8. Compare a family celebration of your own to that of Annie's. How are they similar?  
How are they different? What can we learn by studying the cultural celebrations of others?  
What other religions and cultures are you interested in learning about?
9. What was the story of Raquela? How was her celebration of Shabbat similar to Annie's?  
Why did her family have to hide their celebrations?
10. How is Shabbat like a present? What makes it special for Annie and her family?

## Projects:

### ART:

Create art inspired by that of Cecily Lang that shows a scene from one of your family's celebrations. Ms. Lang used cut paper collage to bring the scenes to life.

### MUSIC:

Find the lyrics to a song that your family uses for worship or holiday celebrations. Copy down the words and in a short journal explain what they mean to you.

### DRAMA:

Act out one of the historical scenes described in the book or share one from your own cultural heritage.

### LANGUAGE:

What are the blessings that Annie's family and synagogue members share? Research and copy down at least five other blessings from various religions or cultures. Create a piece of art inspired by the blessings. Write a blessing of your own.

### HISTORY:

Has the Shabbat celebration changed over time? How so?

### MULTICULTURAL / GEOGRAPHY:

Is Shabbat celebrated differently in other parts of the world? Do other religions celebrate a Sabbath? Can you find the creation stories of other cultures?

### WRITING:

If you celebrate Shabbat, how is it the same and different from Annie's celebration?

How do people you know celebrate Shabbat?